



Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 8, 2014

10:30-noon

James R. Thompson Center, Chicago

Attendance: Cristal Thomas, Kate Maehr, John Cheny Egan, Peter Vina, Mark Ishaug, Dan Lesser, Frank Finnegan, Terri Nally, Sheila Chalmers, Amy Rynell, Janine Lewis, Karen Lehman; on the phone: Kerry Lofton, Barb Karacic, Bert Weber, Mary Ellen Abbott and Gary Tomlin; also attending: Leah Bradford (Kraft), Kathy Chan (Cook County Health), Diane Doherty (Illinois Hunger Coalition), Steven McCullough (GCFD) and Bob Dolgan (GCFD).

I. Minutes from last meeting

Mark Ishaug motioned to approve, and Frank Finnegan seconded

- ### II. State of Hunger in Illinois
- Kate Maehr provided highlights including the high cost of food, the high, continued need at pantries, and a recap of Feeding America’s release of state and county food insecurity data in April.
- a. 14.2 percent of people in Illinois are food insecure (1,833,810 people)
 - b. 21.6 percent of children are food insecure (661,950 children)
 - c. In one county (Alexander), the food insecurity rate is 21.7 percent, and several counties are in the 17-18 percent range.

Dan Lesser commented that the state budget gap for next fiscal year will be \$7 billion and the impact would be inadequate staffing of state departments.

Amy Rynell discussed recent minimum wage proposals, adding that these may result in many people losing eligibility for SNAP.

III. Updates

- a. Realignment of Work Groups – Kate Maehr reported that the Steering Committee discussed in June realigning the work groups around strategies rather than populations. The No Kid Hungry group would remain unchanged, with Janine Lewis of EverThrive as chair; the Vulnerable Adults group will be redefined as Benefits Access Workgroup, with Dan Lesser of Shriver Center and Kathy Chan of Cook County Health and Hospitals System as co-chairs; and the Underserved Populations group will become the Emergency Food System Work Group, with Frank Finnegan of St. Louis Area Food Bank and Terri Nally of Feeding Illinois as co-chairs.
- b. Hunger Summit – Mark Ishaug provided a recap of the Summit that took place in Springfield on April 30. There were 276 attendees representing 116 organizations; David Beckmann of Bread for the World gave the keynote speech.

Frank Finnegan suggested that next year we avoid having the keynote speech during lunch.

Mark and Janine mentioned the success of the Lobby Day on May 1 in Springfield.

Cristal referenced the many new attendees at this year's Summit versus last year.

Kate discussed the breadth of organizations in attendance and the desire for the Summit to continue and to begin plans for 2015.

Mark added that many of the people in attendance were volunteers who expressed being tired. The group discussed this feeling of being tired; from the work, the overwhelming need and not seeing the needle move on hunger.

- c. Federal Legislation – Dan Lesser reported on the passage of the Farm Bill in early 2014. There was a cut to SNAP with regard to the Heat/Eat LIHEAP provision, a cut for 850,000 households nationwide though not in Illinois. Fewer than 850,000 have lost benefits as many states made a decision to put in additional funding in order to maintain the Heat/Eat provision. Dan added that the Commission had sent a letter regarding the Farm Bill Nutrition Title that advocated against “bad” SNAP amendments and that none of those amendments passed. The Farm Bill also added funds for food banks through TEFAP and a SNAP employment pilot in 10 states. Frank Finnegan commented that the additional TEFAP funds have been available in the past but never appropriated.

Dan discussed the Child Nutrition Reauthorization and that the current law expires in September 2015. The President likely will release a proposal for the law in Spring 2015. Advocates hope for no cuts and to make child nutrition programs more accessible.

IV. Work Group Reports

- a. Benefits Access Work Group – Dan Lesser discussed the plan for the group moving forward and shared dates for meetings Sept. 10 and Oct. 29 at 9:30 a.m. The goal for the group is to have a draft work plan available at the Commission meeting in November.
- b. Emergency Food System Work Group – Frank Finnegan discussed research on an agricultural surplus program and recommendation of pilots in two to three regions of the state. Karen Lehman added that a lot of food is left in the field and funding for harvest can gain interest in the farming community. We would need private funding to complement public dollars. Cristal stated that more planning and research would be needed before any discussion of state funding in the fall.
Steven McCullough provided an update on the TEFAP e-signature pilot taking place at six agencies in Cook County since June. The Food Depository is piloting Food Bank Manager software at the sites; Internet access and hardware have been provided. The Food Depository will have more data in late August and will conduct a thorough assessment and determine what a rollout could look like.
- c. No Kid Hungry Work Group – Janine Lewis reported that the state's summer partners have mounted their largest outreach effort yet – 140,000 flyers, postcards and door hangers, 11 kickoff events in eight cities and new social media platforms. Parent ambassadors from COFI (Communities Organizing and Families Issues) have been going door to door in three Chicago neighborhoods. NBC 5 in Chicago is airing public service announcements, and ABC 7 and Fox 32 in Chicago covered the Chicago kickoff. Mary

Ellen Abbott mentioned challenges with the texting and web locator tools, and the Food Depository and the Chicago Summer Work Group will look into this.

Regarding school breakfast, Janine reported that coordinators have reached out to 79 school districts in 2013-2014. In partnership with SOS (Share Our Strength), \$35,070 awarded to eight schools to assist in expansion of School Breakfast. School breakfast participation increased by 7.5 percent in 2012-2013 in Illinois. Next steps are the School Breakfast Challenge 2014-2015 and quarterly grant awards. Also, launch of a School Breakfast Campaign called "Rise & Shine Illinois". Bob Dolgan of the Food Depository shared designs of Rise & Shine Illinois, which will have a website in August and be posted publicly in September. Chicago ad agency Downtown Partners is working on the campaign. Also in 2014, Illinois No Kid Hungry produced the first-ever Illinois School Breakfast Report. Amy Rynell inquired about the ROI on models for school breakfast. The next NKH Work Group meeting will be Sept. 11.

- V. **2014 Commission Report** – Each Commission member received a draft copy of the report, and Kate Maeher requested feedback by July 15. The final report will be presented to the Governor by the end of July.
- VI. **USDA Child Hunger Demonstration Grant** – Cristal Thomas discussed a federal grant that the Illinois Department of Public Health applied for 7/7, in collaboration with the Food Depository and health centers in Chicago Heights and East St. Louis. The proposed program implements food insecurity screens and navigators at the health center level to connect children and families with nutrition programs. The USDA will announce grant awards in October 2014.
- VII. **2015 Work Plans and Next Steps** – Kate Maeher and Cristal Thomas discussed plans for upcoming meetings and locations. The goal is for work plans to be refreshed and reinvigorated for the next year, and that our work be bold and to collectively think about what we can do to make a difference.

Next Commission meeting: Nov. 12, 2014

Steering Committee conference calls: Sept. 12, 2014, and Nov. 5, 2014